

# arc CA

architecture california  
the journal of the american institute of architects  
california council

aiacc design awards issue

01.3



PUBLIC n e s s

- ❖ Portals, Not Pillories
- ❖ The Velveteen Village
- ❖ The Public in Architecture



# The Art of Window Design



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# Comment

This quarter's is a two-part issue. The first part considers aspects of "publicness." Doug Suisman, FAIA, looks at the public space of the L.A. bus system. Michael Hallmark brings us up to speed on the large-scale sports and entertainment venues that have been returning to our city centers after decades of suburban dislocation. Dorit Fromm, AIA, and Carol Shen, FAIA, discuss the changing character of shopping malls and their renewed dialogue with the traditional main street. And Bryan Shiles offers some suggestions for the role of the public in architectural decision-making.

Interestingly, Hallmark and Fromm and Shen describe developments that are in line with a view expressed by Michael Willis in the last number of **arcCA**. Describing his firm's approach to the reinvigoration of failing public housing projects, he says, "We now understand that the best thing that can happen is to increase the links between housing and the rest of the city... We go back and look at the networks. How is this place connected to every part of the city? How would I take a bus home? How would I drive home? How do I walk to a park?... We are arguing for increasing the links." Similarly, both sports arenas and malls are giving up their former isolation in favor of connection with the surrounding public context. Next quarter, we will explore this notion in the complex landscape of maritime industry, as one among a broad range of articles on water-related infrastructure.

The second half of this issue presents the 2001 AIACC Design Award winners. If it seems like we only just published last year's winners, that's because we did. The 2000 Design Awards were slow getting off the press, as we were still learning the ropes of our new publishing arrangement. Now we're rolling. From here on out, you can expect the annual Design Awards to appear, well, annually.

Since you probably still have the previous award's issue on your desk—maybe over there, under that Sweet's CD, which, in case you haven't figured it out, is a gift to AIACC members from our publisher, McGraw-Hill—if you still have that issue handy, you may want to compare the two sets of winners. The 2000 roster included two affordable housing projects and a homeless drop-in center. Nothing like that in 2001, leading one astute ed board member to wonder whether the awards follow swings in national elections. (Lest anyone

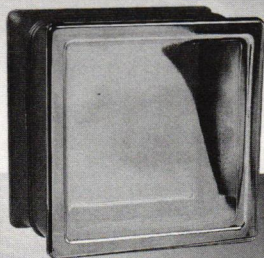
imagine a more direct influence, I hasten to assure you that it's been *ages* since I've spoken with Haley Barbour.) You will draw your own conclusions, but one of them may be a confirmation of David Meckel's advice in the previous issue: "Every jury is different and every pool of entries is different. Always resubmit."

The range of values that may be realized in the built environment is broad, and the ways that they may be realized are many. Each awards roster represents a cross-section taken somewhere through those values and through the ways of making them concrete; and each roster is implicitly a critique of every other. Your responses to the awards and our coverage of them, as well as to the articles on "publicness," are encouraged. I will anticipate one response: that we have, in both awards issues, neglected to feature any historic preservation projects; to which I can only concede, *mea culpa*. I will look for a way to remedy this slight in the coming year.

One last, lovely thing: **arcCA** has won another award—a 2001 Component Excellence Award from the national AIA. Lest you feel left out of the celebration, **arcCA** t-shirts (black, long-sleeve, snappy) are still available. Just send a check for \$20, made out to "ELS **arcCA** t-shirts," along with your name, address, and size, to: ELS, 2040 Addison Street, Berkeley, California, 94704.

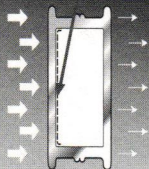
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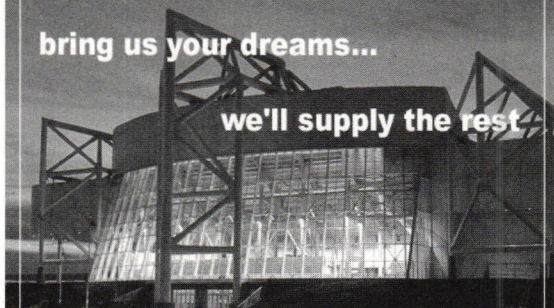
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# Correspondence

Editor/

I wanted to write and tell you that the recent housing issue was like a chapbook on the subject, a goal that former editor Lian Hurst Mann mentioned in these pages several years ago. The balance of articles about affordable, market rate, suburban, and urban was skillful.

I was particularly interested in Jacqueline Leavitt's piece on the Hope VI projects in Los Angeles. Sometimes the government—and the design professionals it hires—do not listen to their constituencies. I am afraid those constituencies are not even recognized. TOOR's resistance to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and the Bus Riders Union's struggle against the Los Angeles MTA come to mind. Leavitt's article reminds us of a key point: organizing is essential to being heard.

Architects and planners are part of the political process. When they recognize the political "context," their contributions may have significant "value" for the communities they serve. These two words should be retrieved from the for-profit real estate market place and reinterpreted in a different terrain. It is important to remember that our own cultural bias, or our client's, can cause real suffering.

**Kenneth Caldwell, Oakland, California**

Editor/

Just a quick note to let you know I really enjoyed the latest issue of *arcCA* ("Housing Complex"). All of the articles were informative, provocative, insightful, and clear. I appreciate your editorial efforts to advance the dialogue on this subject matter. The mix of voices and perspectives challenged the profession to push the boundaries of our thinking and practice about density and quality living. The selected authors also offered up some exciting practical visions of how architects and planners might address these challenges in our communities in the immediate future.

**Shirl Buss, AIA, San Francisco, California**

Editor/

Important developments are occurring in the world of L.A. parks. Land is being set aside for recreation and open space along the Los Angeles River, atop the Baldwin Hills, in Highland Park, and at the Cornfield site. Neighborhood associations and other organizations long active in political contests for more parks and playgrounds have garnered the authority needed to convert plans into parkland. Significant public and philanthropic funds are available to finance these efforts. Both Los Angeles mayoral candidates endorsed plans to improve existing parks and to develop additional sites.

Will the new mayor, former City Attorney James K. Hahn, take the discussion of Los Angeles parks into more ambitious territory? Will his election be marked by bold moves toward comprehensive, as opposed to incremental, park planning? "More parks" was an uncontroversial, unimaginative plank for a municipal election. Might the mayor and council now enlarge the debate from the scale of discrete parks to big ideas about the L.A. environment?

History offers a perspective on the question. Seventy-one years ago, a group of Angelenos and urban planners unveiled an ambitious open-space plan for L.A. County. *Parks, Playgrounds and Beaches for the Los Angeles Region* was the product of a three-year effort sponsored by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. The authors of the report were the best-known landscape architecture firm in the nation, Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Mass., and the planning firm Harland Bartholomew and Associates of St. Louis.

Describing a "crisis in the welfare of Los Angeles," Olmsted and Bartholomew urged immediate action. The county had far fewer acres devoted to playgrounds and parks than other metropolitan areas. The ratio of public space to residents fell far below national standards. Bridging this shortfall would become increasingly difficult as people moved into the region and more land was developed for residences, businesses and industry. Ensuring existing recreational amenities against encroachment and setting aside additional sites for outdoor play and leisure were the only solution.

In nearly 200 pages of text, diagrams, and photographs, the Olmsted-Bartholomew plan depicted a coordinated system of neighborhood playgrounds and parks

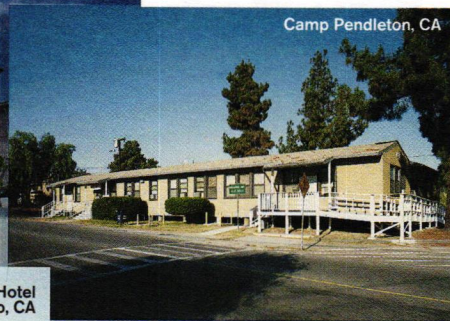


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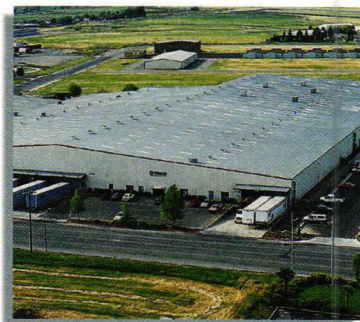
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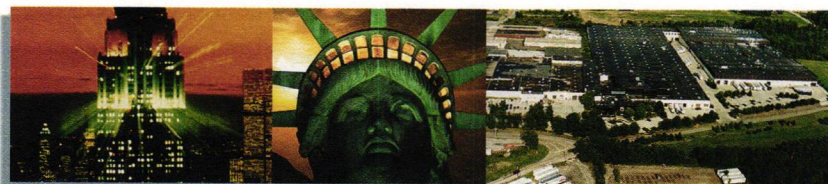


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# Correspondence

connected by pleasure drives or parkways. If implemented, the plan would have linked open space across Los Angeles reaching out to far-flung regional "reservations" in the surrounding mountains and deserts. It was, in short, a masterful environmental vision for the metropolis, Boston's Emerald Necklace transplanted to and adapted for the climate, ecologies, and lifestyles of the Pacific Coast. As landscape architect Laurie Olin has suggested, the planners laid down a challenge. Could L.A.'s civic-commercial elite think big?

Apparently not. *Parks, Playgrounds and Beaches* disappeared into a black hole. Because the planners it hired proposed such sweeping environmental recommendations and, more to the point, equally sweeping reconfigurations of local governance to make it all happen, the Chamber of Commerce responded by killing off the report it had commissioned and financed. The chamber's leadership would not brook the creation of a super-jurisdictional parks board (exactly what Olmsted and Bartholomew wanted), lest the new body threaten its regional clout. A print run of fewer than 200 copies ensured that the report would be more keepsake than blueprint. A bold plan—a brilliant plan—died at the hands of petty political defensiveness and environmental myopia.

Ironically, Olmsted had predicted as much. Years earlier, he had written a Los Angeles resident that the implementation of any comprehensive regional plan for Southern California would owe as much to what he called "the art political" as it would to any technical prowess. True to his prediction, in 1930, partisan politics and a limited view of community and the civic good meant that a bold yet pragmatic vision for a very different environmental future was cast aside.

Yet, this greener vision retains its power, not least because of continuities in the environmental challenges facing the county. Coastal development, beach access, wetland preservation, ecologically sensitive habitats, limits to growth, attempts at some manner of sustainability—these issues remain on the front page and at the forefront of regional concerns.

Over the last several months, each of the mayoral candidates spoke passionately and optimistically whenever

the debate turned to issues of environmental planning. Most invoked the Olmsted-Bartholomew plan as an opportunity missed. Dusting off this report is a step in the right direction, and we would be the first to argue that there is much to learn from history. But an appreciation of what might have been must be coupled with ambitions for the future and what might be. Big plans and big ideas, especially about cities and the environment, are out of favor. This should not be the case. Incremental advances will mean all the more if linked to a comprehensive regional plan for recreation and open space. Certainly, Los Angeles of the 21st century deserves as grand an environmental vision as the one that Olmsted and Bartholomew gamely put forth a lifetime ago.

**Greg Hise and William Deverell**

Greg Hise and William Deverell are the editors of *Eden by Design: the 1930 Olmsted-Bartholomew Plan for the Los Angeles Region* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). This Op Ed piece was originally published in the *Los Angeles Times*, 6 May 2001.



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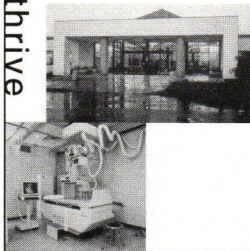
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## Portals



## Not Pillories



## The Bus Stop and Public Space

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Doug Suisman, FAIA

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The pillory was a familiar feature of the medieval city. Authorities would erect the wooden structure in a public space so that social offenders would be punished by way of humiliating public confinement. In contemporary Los Angeles, a similar scenario unfolds at the typical bus stop. Our latter-day social offender—the citizen who has failed to obtain a car—is confined to an ugly plastic bench with advertising. The bench sits inches from the curb, where vehicles speed by in alarming proximity. A metal trash can overflows with refuse. Trees are removed so that no shading is available in summer; in winter, rain falls unimpeded. A metal pole carries a route number sign without any information on the route itself or the schedule of the bus. The punishment is completed by hundreds of scornful glances from passing drivers, comfortable in their air-conditioned cars. An Elizabethan constable would have heartily approved.

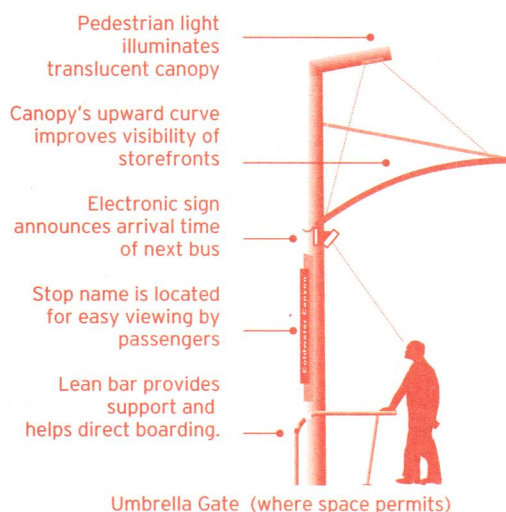
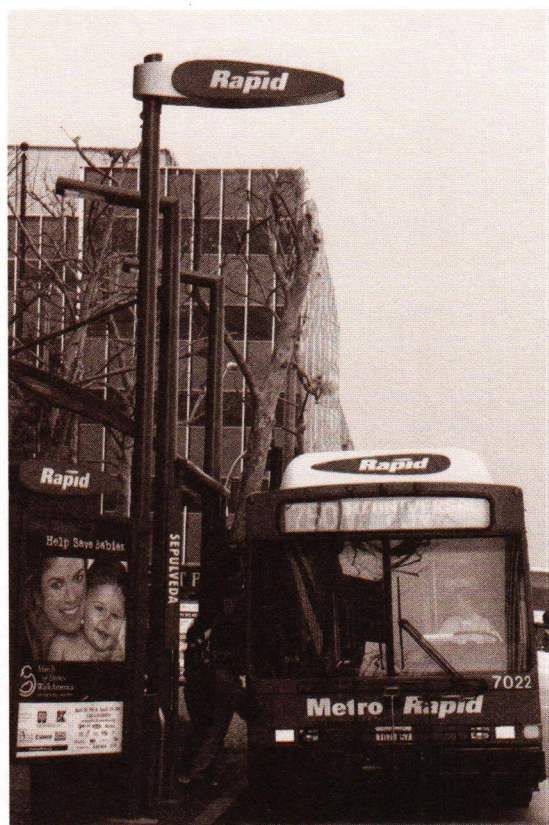
The neglectful mistreatment of riders at bus stops is only the most visible indicator of the broader decline of the public transit system itself. Los Angeles once had a famous network of trolley lines, but the explosive growth in automobile ownership and post-war suburban expansion eventually made the trolleys seem slow and obsolete. The irreplaceable rights-of-way were abandoned, and trolley lines became bus routes. The buses became stuck in the same traffic as cars. The

middle class stopped using the buses altogether. Ridership plummeted. Service declined.

Yet today, even without significant middle class patronage, Los Angeles County still has more than a million bus boardings a day, the highest number in the country after New York. These boardings are made primarily by the “transit dependent,” a technocratic euphemism for the working poor, the mentally ill, the disabled, the adolescent, the elderly, the carless, the homeless, and the occasional solid citizen whose car is in the shop. The middle class is barely aware of the bus system at all, other than the annoying tendency of its buses to get in their way as they drive the boulevards. The bus stop is really the single urban location where the two populations—the transit dependent and the transit independent—actually observe each other at close range. The conditions of the bus stop can only confirm the relief of the middle class motorist at not having to use the bus at all.

Public transit and public space go hand in hand. In both cases, Los Angeles middle class lack of interest has led to disinvestment. The dismaying condition of the bus stops can be extrapolated to large swaths of sidewalks, plazas, and parks. But disinvestment is not the same thing as disappearance. It has become fashionable among certain architectural critics to declare the end of public space. These urban obituaries are





usually preoccupied with burnished concepts like the privatization of the public realm, the mall of the street, disneyfication or theme park urbanism, the new electronic agora, the crisis of cultural inauthenticity. But these critiques are primarily concerned with symbols of middle class culture and commerce and usually ignore the very real, very neglected, and very public streets, sidewalks, and bus stops that millions of working class citizens inhabit every day. For them, for better or worse, public space endures.

The pedestrian walking to the bus stop knows that this public space is real because, within it, she puts her body on the line. She isn't just a pair of Jane Jacob's famous "eyes on the street," a metaphor for a shopkeeper or apartment dweller gazing on a crowded public space from the safety of a private doorway or window. The bus rider is a body on the sidewalk. Occupying public space increases your physical vulnerability—to discomfort, annoyance, revulsion, fear, abuse, injury. That's the price you pay. At the same time, there is supposed to be a reward. Easy movement around the city. Exposure to appealing but hidden places. Chance encounters with interesting strangers. The sense of belonging to an urban community. Even the satisfaction of reducing your contribution to environmental degradation. These are the pleasures that the middle class pays dearly for on vacation but shuns in daily life back home, where armored vehicles with leather seats are the preferred mode of urban mobility. Most Los Angeles transit users don't have the luxury of that choice. They are the involuntary foot soldiers of the city's public space. By virtue of their numbers alone, they populate and therefore activate public spaces that the middle class has left for dead.

Over the past decade, this situation has begun to change, as the middle class has come to the tentative conclusion that investment in public transit and public space may have economic and social benefits for them. Streetscape and downtown revitalization projects abound. And Los Angeles now has an embryonic subway system and two light rail lines, with as many as three more light rail lines under construction or under consideration. But rail's high construction costs, political complexities, and limited potential for expansion have also forced officials to take a fresh look at the discredited bus system.

The existing bus system has the great advantage of going virtually everywhere. Despite the vastness of Los Angeles, there's actually a bus stop within reasonable walking distance of millions of residences. But it also has two major disadvantages. The first is speed. Slower speeds may be tolerable in compact cities where distances are short and walking is an alternative, but not in an urban area a quarter the size of



Switzerland. The economic penalty of long-distance delay is too great. The second is the image of bus transit itself, which is widely viewed as dirty, noisy, and inferior to rail in any form. Some of the blame for this poor image can be attributed to transit operators, who have failed to imagine buses as anything other than rubber-tired boxcars to be covered with advertising. But politicians and the engineering/construction industry have also contributed by pushing exclusively for more glamorous, more expensive, and more job-producing rail projects.

To overcome these disadvantages, in the mid 1990's the Los Angeles County MTA and the city of Los Angeles's Department of Transportation began to develop a demonstration project to improve both the speed and image of bus transit. Studies showed that traffic congestion was responsible for only 50% of the slow speeds. The other half derived from time spent waiting at red lights and the "dwell time" at bus stops. Dwell time delays were also multiplied by the high number of stops, typically located every two or three blocks. In the new project—40 miles along Ventura and Wilshire Boulevards—stops would be spaced approximately one mile apart, like a rail line. New electronic technology would be used to hold green lights a few seconds longer for the bus. New buses would be ordered with low floors for easier and faster boarding, larger windows for better views and security, and compressed natural gas engines for lower emissions. The "station stops" would be designed to further accelerate boarding. Electronic signs would give waiting passengers information on the arrival of the next bus. And the whole system would have a new graphic and architectural identity. It would be called Metro Rapid.

Our task was to develop a visual identity for the Metro Rapid system and to create a single, distinctive design for station stops. The design had to speed passenger boarding, provide enhanced passenger amenities, look appropriate in a wide range of urban settings, fit onto narrow sidewalks, minimize visual obstruction of adjacent businesses, expand easily for longer buses anticipated in later phases, anticipate the eventual pre-payment of fares and multi-door boarding, allow for fast and minimally disruptive construction, and be sufficiently economical to allow for widespread application of the design.

We developed the Rapid shape—referred to variously as the comet, the surfboard, or the airfoil—to provide the system with a distinctive and memorable form. Our hope was to contribute a positive symbol of public investment in public space that could hold its own in the sea of private commercial symbols that border the boulevards.

The design treats each stop as a defined public environment within the larger public space of the street. The

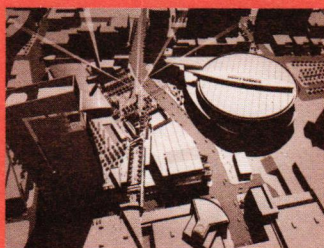
basic modular element is an "umbrella gate": two 16-foot steel poles joined at mid-point by a crossbar, surmounted by a curved, translucent canopy. This goalpost form creates a literal gate that marks the exact spot where the doors of the Metro Rapid bus will arrive, which helps speed boarding and debarking. The base of each support pole is protected by a curved stainless steel railing, which directs passengers to the door and provides support for leaning (seating is typically not provided because of the frequency of Rapid buses, which arrive as often as every 3 minutes during peak hours). The door's location is indicated by a "welcome mat" of red concrete pavers.

Signage is an important component. Mounted on each gate's crossbar is an electronic message sign providing real-time information on the arrival time of the next bus. At the leading edge of the stop, a 19-foot high "flagpole" with an illuminated Rapid sign extending over the street helps approaching passengers see the stop from several blocks away. An attached kiosk displays to waiting passengers a large, illuminated map of the entire transit system. Revenue from an advertisement on the traffic side of the kiosk helps pay for stop maintenance.

Metro Rapid was launched in the summer of 2000. The cost per mile: about \$2.5 million, compared with \$250 million for the subway. It was an immediate statistical and popular success. Travel times have been cut by as much as 25%. Ridership on the two lines has risen by an average of 30%. Perhaps most significantly for the long term prospects of public transit in Los Angeles, half of that increase in ridership is from "new riders," those who had previously used a car instead of a bus. Within ten months of the opening of the two Rapid lines, the MTA board voted to expand the system from two to 22 lines, with another 14 to be considered later. Six new lines are to be selected for immediate implementation.

The attitude of waiting passengers at the Rapid stops appears to be one of greater assurance and pride. They can see the investment in the place where they're waiting. Thanks to the electronic message sign, they know when the next bus will arrive. And they know that the bus which arrives will be clean, modern, and fast. The bus stop becomes a lively, dignified, and focused urban space, where many people can harmoniously do many different things, from sitting in the sun, to waiting for the bus, to buying flowers, to making a phone call, to purchasing a transit pass. The bus stop infrastructure is reconceived as a two-way portal—a gateway to the transit system as you board, a gateway to the city as you get off. Pillories transformed into portals: they offer glimmers of hope for public transit and public space in Los Angeles. ●







# The Planner's

# to the Future of

# and Entertainment

# Guide

# Sports

# Development

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Michael Hallmark

Few building types have had a greater impact on our communities than the modern sports facility. They affect local transportation, public funding priorities, urban planning, and city and state politics. Their power to influence public policy, public open space, city skylines, and even a region's international public relations has resulted in an inevitable love-hate relationship with these projects.

The public interest in these projects was vividly demonstrated to me in January of 1996. I was a principal with NBBJ architects, interviewing for the design of a new retracting-roof ballpark for the Seattle Mariners in Downtown Seattle. Now known as Safeco Field, the project was controversial, as many of these developments are. There was nothing surprising in that fact, but when the selection committee chose us over our rivals at HOK, the *Seattle Times* ran the selection as a banner headline. Not just a front-page story, but an inch-tall headline. It was dramatic evidence that these facilities had become the rock stars of architecture. They were no longer design problems for a few specialty sports architects; they were an opportunity to alter a city's perception of itself, which is always a newsworthy event.

Today, professional sport is simply a subset of the much larger marketplace of entertainment. Its health and survival in our society will depend on adapting to changing consumer markets. Entertainment retail and sports are essentially a marriage made in marketing heaven. Typical arenas in the U.S. can regularly attract 2 million visitors a year without much regard to the location. That drawing power is valuable to many other interests including retail, dining, and corporate advertisers willing to invest in a product that goes beyond the traditional sponsor signage found in most facilities today. The drawing power of sports and entertainment facilities can also help to re-energize the public realm of our city centers.

## Changing Concepts of the Sports Facility

What might be required from these facilities in the future is best understood in the context of their historical evolution. The modern day sports facility, like most other naturally evolving things in our society, saw significant changes only when there were outside forces at work. After the rise of sports venues under Greek and Roman cultural domination, new facility development virtually stopped for more than



a millennium. It took several unrelated events—the industrial revolution that created a middle class with leisure pursuit interests, the invention of several new forms of team sports, and the creation of the modern era Olympic movement—to bring renewed interest in arena and stadium development.

The early 19th century fostered a climate of development that resulted in some of the most venerated of sports facilities, including Fenway Park, Wrigley Field, and Forbes Field. Unfortunately, the contribution these projects made to the language of sports design was lost to later generations of planners, who abandoned the urban centers of American cities in favor of post World War II suburbia. By the '60s, downtowns were suffering from compound social and economic ills. The undeveloped areas outside central cities offered affordable real estate, room for parking cars that Americans now loved to drive, and new freeways to take them there. The stadium archetypes that resulted from the new and simplified planning models cleverly accommodated a range of sporting events, but they were Spartan, devoid of any of the personality that endeared so many fans to the older venues.

Fortunately, the suburban myopia that affected everything from housing development to retail malls and transportation was about to experience another paradigm shift. Supported by urban redevelopment efforts, stadiums and arenas would no longer be seen as isolated objects. These projects, capable of attracting millions of visits yearly, could serve as economic engines for urban centers.

While there was significant construction of facilities during the '60s and '70s, the true renaissance did not begin until the '80s. This time around, many new and powerful forces were in play. Unabashedly aggressive cities courting team relocations, player celebrity with its accompanying stratospheric salaries, escalating corporate sponsorships, and cable television all fueled development. There was also a subtle but growing shift toward a new entertainment economy.

Under the unwritten rules of the new entertainment economy, a trip to the stadium or arena must be an entertaining experience before, during, and after the game, win or lose. Otherwise, fans will simply opt out to find new forms of leisure-time amusement. And, when attendance at live

sports events loses its cachet for the general public, there will be less reason for corporations to support teams or facilities by owning exclusive seating. Going to the game must be a universally appreciated experience, or the entire complex of interconnecting needs begins to unravel.

Sports, of course, is not the only industry to go through such rapid transformational change. Retail has shifted just as radically, and the surviving product is also a much more entertaining and interactive experience. Experiments from the '90s, such as City Walk at Universal City, California, and the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, offer divergent but equally effective views of the future of retail. Corporate retailers like Rouse and the Mills Corporation likewise have different approaches, but they share a common understanding of the need to create an experience that entertains while creating commerce.

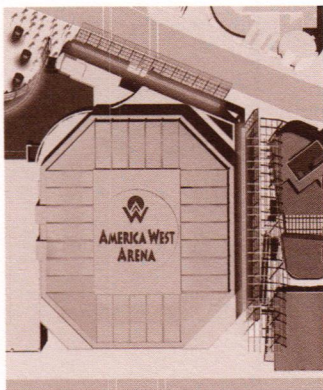
The next generation of sports facility development will be primarily urban in location and diversified in its uses. It will more fully capitalize on the variety of ancillary uses and on the destination drawing power of the sports venue as its anchor. It will partner with other destination attractions. New, entertaining retail such as sports merchandising, music, book sales, and a greater variety of one-of-a-kind sports bars and food venues will work more closely in a partnership with the principal sports tenant.

### **Sports Facility Development and the Public Realm**

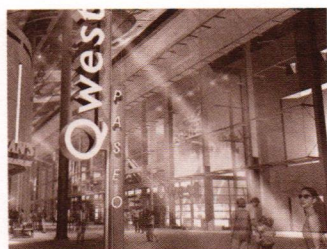
More team owners and facility operators are now seeing the impact their projects can have on surrounding districts and are taking steps to exploit the full potential of these developments for their own programs. Two existing arena projects, Staples Center in Los Angeles and the America West Arena in Phoenix, illustrate the importance of co-developing the adjacent public district along with the facility itself.

Staples Center Arena is a prime example of a sports venue that is being used as an entertainment anchor in a larger vision. Along with a variety of concerts, conventions, and awards programs, It has the distinction of being the only arena in the world with three major franchises (two NBA and one NHL tenant). But it is not the number of event days





America West entertainment district, Phoenix



Future Paseo at America West Arena

that will ultimately allow Staples Center to endure over the next decade; it will be the successful development of its entertainment master plan.

With the arena itself complete and entering its third season, the Los Angeles Arena Land Co. is turning its attention to the creation of an entire entertainment district in downtown Los Angeles. In a site that many thought not workable for such a development, Staples Center is set to convincingly illustrate, once again, that destination attractions like stadia and arenas belong in urban cores.

The key elements in the L.A. master plan now include a convention hotel, a 7000-seat performance theater, restaurants, clubs, retail, and a public plaza that will allow for the assembly of 50,000 people outdoors. These interconnecting uses have the potential to create a much-needed sense of place for downtown LA, all of it brought about by the initial project of a single sports venue.

Some older arenas are also being newly integrated into a larger public realm. One of the pioneers of modern revenue-producing arena design, Phoenix's America West Arena, was once the highest

producing arena for advertising revenue in the NBA. That was in 1992. But that record was short-lived, ending when Chicago's United Center opened the following year. It continued to be broken by successive facilities. Now the 17th oldest facility in the NBA, America West Arena needed a major reconstruction and is currently undergoing a \$40 million redevelopment.

The New America West Arena will include two new food venues, one by Chicago based Levy, a new Jillian's that will feature a sports bar, bowling, billiards, and after hours live music, and a complete overhaul of the public areas. Experiential Sponsorship will make its debut here in the form of a new interior entrance pavilion and an exterior public walk called the Paseo. Like the connecting walks in both Atlanta's Philips Arena (Hawk Walk) and Miami's American Airlines Arena, the Paseo will insure that this sports venue ends its urban introversion and becomes, out of practical necessity, a connective catalyst to other downtown experiences.

### Bringing it Home

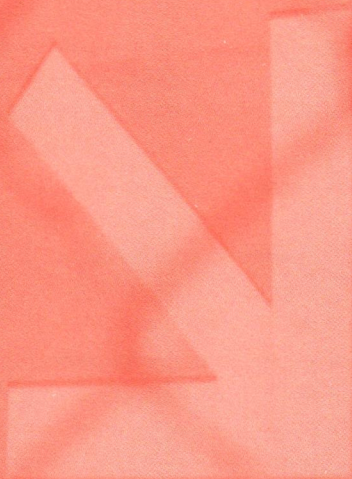
The stadia and arenas of the future will no longer be isolated affairs. Their developers will create partnerships with many non-sports industries that share the need to capture consumer attention. They will become more complex in order to become more interesting, with more diverse uses in order to generate more diverse revenues. And they will reconnect with, rather than separate themselves from, the surrounding public realm.

The planning models that are now being developed at the professional sports level will eventually be incorporated into smaller, second tier cities and universities. Like the concept of suites, which began in the most exotic of large facilities, those ideas that find a responsive consumer will be realized at many different levels and sizes of facilities. Mixed-use sports and entertainment is one of these ideas.

Our common desire to be entertained, and the corollary need to create places in which to be entertained, is one of the enduring traits of civilization. The modern-day challenge is not in developing the idealized project that can outlast all others, but in creating facilities that adapt to the best ideas of the present day without foreclosing on future possibilities. ●



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**The Velveteen Village**



(or How a Pretend Publicness Can Become Real)

Dorit Fromm, AIA, with Carol Shen, FAIA

As connoisseurs of place-making, architects have long idealized the publicness of the village square, while bemoaning malls and shopping centers. Granted, there are good reasons to moan: many malls give the appearance of having dropped out of the sky with no clue about their surroundings. Bulky, introspective, car-girdled malls are viewed as the wallflower building type in urban design.

While the village square has been locally grown over time, connected to surrounding buildings and inclusive, malls are a controlled publicness whose entrances aren't really open to all, with an underlying agenda of merchandising, not socializing, at their core.<sup>1</sup> Mall guests are scrutinized, monitored, and analyzed with a monetary aim, their surroundings scripted to create brand identity. The village square has been perceived as "real" publicness while malls are vilified as faux publicness.

So why shouldn't architects and planners continue their nostalgia for real village publicness (which, in California, can be more fantasy than reality), and thumb their noses at places like malls?



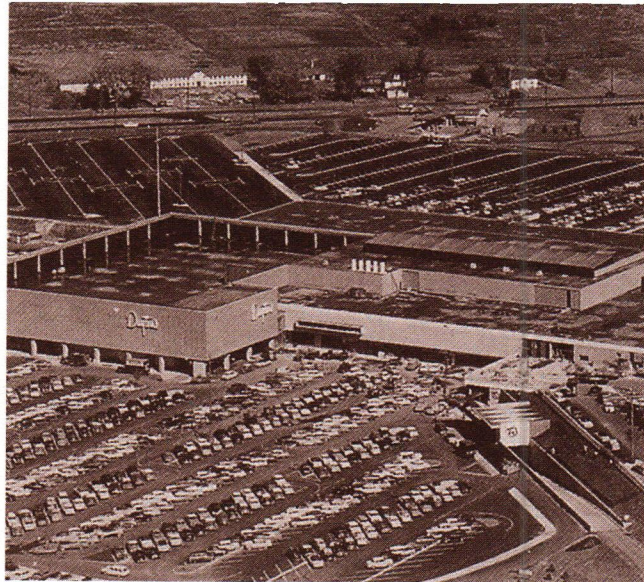
## America's Number 1 Attraction (not Yellowstone, not the Statue of Liberty)

Mall of America, in Bloomington, Minnesota, attracts 42 million people each year and is the number one most visited attraction in the U.S. Visitors don't go there just to visit the 500+ shops and eat at 50 restaurants, they also attend public events and celebrations. Americans love this place: over 1500 couples have been married in it. Of course, this love affair has grown from repeated, and often life-time, exposure to shopping malls and centers. There are 5.57 billion square feet of shopping centers in the U.S., taking in 51% of all retail sales. According to the International Council of Shopping Centers, 94% of Americans visit shopping centers each month.

A lot of these folks are Californians. This state has the most shopping centers of any in the country, and Los Angeles wins first place as the city with the most shopping centers in the U.S.<sup>2</sup> (Not surprising that one of the largest malls built, Ontario Mills, is just east of Los Angeles.) Overall in California, shopping centers are a bigger crop than produce, with 6,034 of them generating an estimated \$130 billion in sales.<sup>3</sup> Of those shopping centers, about 300 are malls, 300,000 to over 1,000,000 square feet in size.<sup>4</sup> Every decade since the '60s has seen an expansion.

## Consumed by Consumption

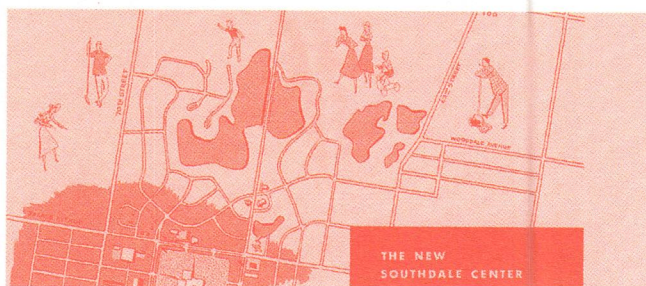
Before any teenager had ever spent an afternoon at a mall, back in the early '50s, architect Victor Gruen envisioned an enclosed shopping center as a new town center. The first indoor shopping mall, Southdale, was planned by Gruen in Michigan and modeled on a European shopping street recalled from his native Austria. Gruen devised a new type of heat pump that kept the interior at an even temperature year-round so that visitors had a place not only for shopping, but to "have social meetings, to relax together, to enjoy art... good food and entertainment." (Unlike European shopping streets, Southdale was built in a cornfield outside Minneapolis.) For this innovation, *U.S. News* declared Gruen one of "25 makers of the American Century." Southdale turned into a model for suburban shopping (and sprawl), and "for better or worse, Gruen changed the landscape of the continent."<sup>5</sup>



The first enclosed mall, the introverted Southdale Shopping Center, near Minneapolis, 1956.



Gruen studied Minnesota's weather patterns to prove advantages of an enclosed mall.



A page from a brochure distributed to area residents before Southdale's zoning meeting.



Over the succeeding fifty years, suburbs and malls have propagated, hand in hand. The malls primarily attracted women with time on their hands, whose suburban values were reflected in the clean, safe, and well-landscaped interiors that turned their backs to surrounding homes, just as suburbanites had turned their backs to the city.

Countering the ennui of the suburbs and the isolation of the home, malls turned the task of shopping into something enjoyable, even fun. In many California new towns, there was no other public place to go, no older community context for gathering on the spur of the moment. Teens and the elderly often had no traditional gathering place, or, if such a place existed in a park or square, it was increasingly perceived as unsafe or boring.

Bigger and better malls attracted more and more visitors—so much so that they became competition for more traditional street shopping, often taking the “public” out of the public realm and beckoning them into a fantasy publicness. Sealed in the comfort of conditioned air, where day and night are banished (along with clocks and easy exits), larded with sale items, abundant food courts, Muzak, and free parking: the allure proved irresistible.

### Ever New

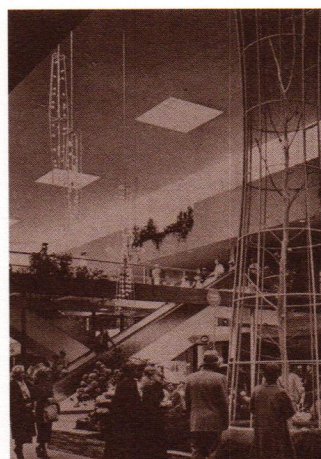
Shoppers are attracted to malls partly because of their newness. Accordingly, malls cannot be left to their own devices for too long, but must be frequently repositioned, like aspirin or detergents. If not, they eventually suffer from “mall fatigue.” They begin to lose their magic attraction, fewer shoppers come, and, with fewer people inside, they’re perceived as stale. If an anchor tenant leaves, the mall may spiral downward. As a product, the public spaces inside malls, far more than those of public streets, have to be continually repackaged—stuffed with new colors, motifs, landscaping—for public appeal.

### Malling Main Street

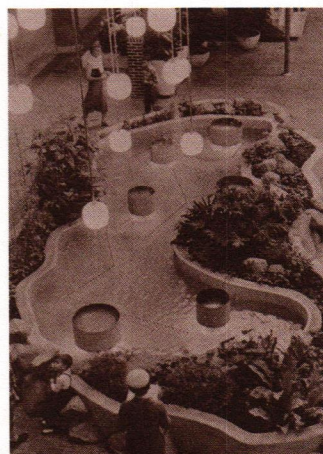
As new shopping centers worked to attract visitors through a Bigger & Brighter image and enhanced public spaces, the traditional stores and main streets that were losing their customers began paying attention. In some city districts, shops began to band together to coordinate landscaping, colors, merchandising, and security. Banners, events, places to sit



For Gruen, the interior of Southdale functioned like a town square. Opening Day, 1956.



The “Garden Court of Perpetual Spring” featured canaries and a magnolia tree. Southdale.



First mall water feature—a gold fish pond. Southdale.



## Luring a shopper who seeks the good life and hungers for authenticity requires a revisioning of the traditional mall.

and hang out eventually were added to downtown shopping streets as they sought to become “branded,” some as an idealized Main Street experience (evoking a cleaner, sweeter, better landscaped, and more expensive shopping version of the past). In some cities where there was little downtown life, the addition of an integrated retail development (a cousin to the suburban mall) was like a spark to dead wood. More than a few downtowns have become activated and revitalized, ablaze with life, through such catalyst developments as Pioneer Place, in Portland, Oregon, and Denver Pavilions, on Denver’s 16th Street Transit Mall. Through branding, uniting shop owners, and insertion of mall-like retail developments, a new generation of downtowns picked up on the positive attributes of mall’s place-making.

### **Time Out: Rethinking American’s Favorite Recreational Activity**

Shopping malls, although still beloved, were designed for a way of life that is now changing. Just as the suburbs are undergoing changes—people moving back to the city, longer commutes, affordability issues—so too for malls. Aside from the increasing percentage of retail sales through internet shopping, big box retail, and warehouse shopping,

malls are also facing competition from the re-discovery of and re-kindled fascination with the new and improved Main Street. In addition, so many malls have reproduced across the landscape that they are becoming their own competition.

Adding to their woes, suburban values of one generation are being supplanted by the post-material values of another. Quality-of-life issues, identity, a sense of community: these are the values that shoppers often bring when hunting for a new pair of shoes. The experience of shopping is as important to them as what is bought, and that experience had better be fresh and memorable, or they won’t be back.

Luring a shopper who prefers being and experiencing to pure consumption, who seeks the good life and hungers for authenticity, requires a revisioning of the traditional mall. Developers are realizing that simply building Bigger & Brighter isn’t going to do it. The focus has turned to creating a sense of place. To overcome mall fatigue and to stay distinctive, mall developers are looking at successful downtown streets and focusing on shopping experiences that offer variety with each visit. And they are turning towards the “unscripted” public to achieve it.

### **Mall Morphing: Evolution & Devolution**

People are hungry for an informal public life and they are attracted to the changing, the varied, and the conjectural. Architects may disparage a public that wants to pay for cleaner, more secure, more entertaining and controlled spaces than the reality that city centers often have to offer, but in fact these qualities are the key to their attraction. Recent shopping developments are trying to provide the best of both worlds through new hybrids—both controlled and ad-libbed.

While the first generation of malls turned inward, a new generation is appearing with both inward and outward facing shops. The best of these, like Perimeter Mall in Atlanta or Stanford Shopping Center, turn an appealing public face to their surroundings. Another evolution connects the mall with adjacent city streets, seen in examples like Broadway Plaza in Walnut Creek. The most successful models create a synergy: by tying into existing street shopping or enlivening building frontages that have for so many



years turned their backs to public streets, merchandising and a sense of publicness are both strengthened.

As malls originally “improved” the street shopping experience, and shopping areas took on ideas from malls, so, in turn, mall developers have begun incorporating the diversity of experiences and spectacle aspects of public street activities. They have enhanced the old suburban formula by adding concerts, seasonal celebrations, festivals, more food, and more outdoor experiences. Morphing from mall toward mixed-use, developments have appeared with the multi-purpose additions found in downtown districts: entertainment, offices, and housing.

### Becoming real

The faux publicness of the Future Mall replicates the real publicness of the neighborhood shopping street of the past. The new shopping experience—like a traditional neighborhood—is an outdoor experience that has stores facing the street, with distinct façades and goods that are specifically chosen with the locale in mind. This arrangement combines the attraction of the scripted environment of malls that are managed by one master developer/owner with the appearance of individually owned shops, evolving over time.

These ambitious developments can create an instant downtown, as Mizner Park does for Boca Raton, Florida. The 30 acre site, once occupied by the failed Boca Raton Mall, was turned into a neotraditional “village-within-the-city” as owner/developer Crocker & Company envisioned it. This \$60 million development includes a main boulevard with a linear central green, Plaza Real (decorated with gazebos, benches, and fountains), surrounded by 50 shops and restaurants, evoking a European style shopping street, 300 units of housing, and 300,000 square feet of offices. Blessed by no less than the Sierra Club as a great sprawl-alternative, Mizner Park attracts residents and tourists alike, who flock to enjoy the Main Street atmosphere, both day and night.

California has big plans for similar developments. The soon-to-be-opened Santana Row in San Jose, a \$700 million mixed-use retail project with 1200 units of housing (and a 200-room hotel with a grand European palazzo), turns the ailing Town & Country Shopping Center into an urban village—place-making on a fast track schedule.



Mizner Park creates an 'instant' Downtown for Boca Raton, Florida.

These new types of urban retail projects can trace their evolution from lessons learned from European shopping streets as clearly as those learned from malls. Place-making begins by providing a diversity of experiences, by attunement to the culture of the area, by meaningfully tying into the surrounding streets and district, and through the addition of housing and services. The public is attracted through the enchantment of theme and fantasy, through a tailored mix of retail and entertainment, a sense of safety and security, and more than a whiff of excitement.

Who can combine these lessons into memorable multi-dimensional places, quickly, better than architects? Models are needed that include places for people to live and work, cultural amenities for all ages, good access, and some room for incremental growth; that's what will make these instant downtowns or villages responsive over time.

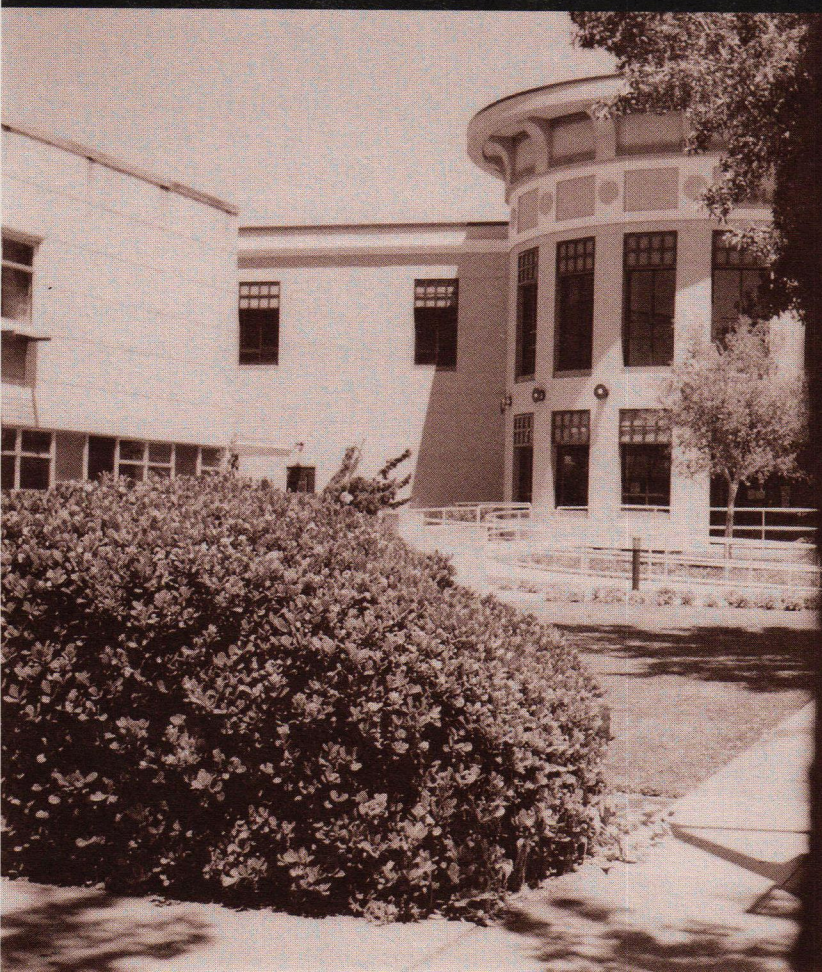
The question is not whether these faux-authentic retail streets create a “real” place (whatever that means in this new century). Instead, will people want to live there, and will visitors be drawn back over time, so that these places (like the Velveteen Rabbit) have a chance to be worn, altered, and loved? ●

#### Notes

1. The issues of remote ownership vs. local ownership, the separation of production and consumption, and other economic differences deserve, at the very least, more attention than space in this article allows.
2. From *Shopping Center Directions*, published by the National Research Bureau, Spring 2001, and 2000 statistics from the International Council of Shopping Centers, New York.
3. 2000 statistics from the International Council of Shopping Centers, New York.
4. Malls (a type of shopping center) are defined as regional or super-regional centers, typically enclosed, with department stores as anchors.
5. *U.S. News & World Report*, on-line, cover story, 27 December 1999.



# The Problem of Architecture in Public





# and the Public in Architecture

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Bryan Shiles, AIA

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Inside the universal “outside” that surrounds us, there is an inferred and imaginary consciousness: inferred because we believe in it the way we believe in Other Minds (surface, after all, means “on the face”); imaginary because it is purely projected – not without excuse – but projected beyond the simple smile lines which say smile, or the brow’s wriggles which write puzzlement or anxiety, to create the emotional state we regularly assume would draw them. These conditions of consciousness, which live metaphorically “behind” the configurations of the city’s face, can dampen or liberate our feelings almost by osmosis, the way any friend’s or lover’s gestures can, through the frank show of this state of mind. –William H. Gass, “The Face of the City”

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Because architecture defines the human landscape, it is the most public of art forms. No matter what the use or context, a work of architecture—or, more accurately, the aggregate of architecture—dominates the visual field in which we live our lives. Architecture’s visual prominence drives the contentious debate over public values in architecture. What makes a building good or bad, worthwhile or wasted, progressive or conservative, is often what makes us the same. Thus it follows that good architecture is critical, that it searches to define us but does not stop there. The best architecture carries us forward by appealing to vision, not nostalgia, and aspirations, not fears. Doing so requires a challenge to, and not the mere confirmation of, our assumptions.

In “The Face of the City,” William Gass illustrates the reflexive relationship we have with architecture. Our consciousness affects the way we read the city and our consciousness is affected by the signs that the city’s surfaces project back to us. Implicit in this relationship is the importance of the language of architecture. How the surfaces are articulated, what they allude to or disregard, is as important a component in urban design as the scale and

arrangement of the pieces. The surfaces of the city have the power not only to shock, but more significantly to quietly shape our everyday lives. They are the most visible murals of the inspiration or the complacency of the public will. This is the context, both physical and spiritual, that anticipates architecture and demands rigor in its appraisal.

Yet if criticism of context is so vital to public architecture, who provides the criticism? Traditionally, of course, criticism has been part of the authorial purview of the artist. For the architect, that most public of artists, this purview creates a special conundrum. On one hand, authorship is a private undertaking, part of the creative process that is at its heart very personal (even if undertaken as part of a professional collaboration). On the other hand, an integral component of the best design is specificity to its site, and the architect is in most cases a citizen of a metropolitan world, not a representative of a particular locale. As an interpreter of context, a provocateur who translates the known into the unfolding, the architect requires assistance in making a complete assessment of what best informs the design.



This is the reason that the contemporary process provides structured opportunity for the public to voice its priorities for a given design. This structure typically defines “the public” through elected or appointed representatives in government, the principal “users” of the space to be created, as well as other “stakeholders” from the community at large, residents and businesspeople who will be affected in any number of ways by the design. However, the public voice often fogs the mirror in which the public image is reflected, leading to the lack of inspiration—or worse, the equivocation—that is among the most virulent cancers of architecture. Another very real problem is that a handful of vocal advocates can hijack the public process and impose a vision for the design that is not only unrepresentative of the public character but also reactionary and retrograde.

Our conundrum restated: it takes two to tango, but the architect and the public are uneasy partners. The democratization of the process of architecture has destabilized the traditional relationship between architect and public. How might a new, workable relationship be formed?

A sustainable balance between public and architecture lies in the vernacular—that is, in the particulars of the form, memory, and rituals of a place. The public’s ability to frame an authentic cultural context in which architecture may be created derives from these particulars. Rather than prescribing

the outcome of a design, the public process should set goals and elucidate the patterns and traditions of a place.

Likewise the architect, in imparting sensibility, should respect this information by making it fundamental to the design rather than peripheral, the meat rather than the garnish. This priority does not preclude, but further necessitates, the architect’s role as observer and interpreter, which involves a stepping away from the vernacular to get a critical perspective. The public process gives the architect more to consider, more to synthesize, and demands, if anything, a greater critical distance in order to see the forest for the trees. It is in the architect’s reunion with context, in the return from the critical distance, that the success of the design is measured. After all, the public process is an act of entrustment, and it is a betrayal for the architect to return from his Olympian retreat with an inflexible design that disregards or minimizes or mocks the contributions of the stakeholders. To do so casts the architect as an unrepresentative special interest, the alter ego of the most fractious element on the other side of the equation.

In many cases, failures in the public process have their roots in the way that the idea of context has come to be understood in the public realm. Discussions of context are now so biased toward the creation of continuity that more authentic interpretations of place have been abandoned. Is the fabric of the Northern Waterfront District in San Francisco best described by punched brick walls or the rawness of industry? Is the future of downtown Culver City best served by the recreation of an ersatz Main Street America or an exploration of the promise of media in the public realm? It is not for any individual or special interest to decide these issues. Yet, because a public process often pits architects fearful of having their authority diminished against a public wary of elitist architecture that makes little reference to, and has little use for, the people who must interact with it, substantive discussions about place are hard to come by. When such conflicts occur, the resolution is usually found in the lowest common denominator, in mimicry of the past rather than a progression from the past.

A case in point occurred recently in Berkeley. The city needed a new public safety building and

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chose a site adjacent to its City Hall, a classical building designed in 1938 by James Placheck. There were several iterations to the selection of an architect for the project, including a design competition. The competition brief stated that response to the goals of the community and the context of the City Hall building would be the key criteria for selecting the winner. Given the site and program, such a priority certainly makes sense and would seem to be the foundation for an exploration of cultural context, especially in a city as broad-minded as Berkeley.

At several points along the way, the city was presented with the portfolios of architects who would clearly be critical in their view of context. And at several junctures various architects had the opportunity to craft dialogue around the cultural context of Berkeley. Ultimately, however, the city chose a safe route. The pat solution of continuity as context won out over a progressive direction. How can it be that in Berkeley, where across town at UC the canon of the DWM's (dead white men) was being challenged with vigor, it was ultimately seen as appropriately contextual that the public services building be wrought in the language of classicism? It is beyond the scope of this article to explain how this happened, but what is most poignant is that, from the inception of the need for the project to the final built reality, there was no process that elucidated the cultural context necessary to produce an authentic work of architecture. As a result, the city got a most a-contextual building. Nothing in the design speaks to Berkeley's famously progressive civic values.

One way to form a link between the patterns and traditions of place and the language of architecture would be through the old fashioned notion of propriety. That is, one can make good matches among place, time, and program through judicious choices. Thomas Jefferson, for example, argued that classicism was a good choice for American civic buildings after his visit to that little temple in France. Gothic has been seen as an appropriate choice for college campuses, etc. In today's world of expanded choices (like the multitude of television channels) a client or municipality or whoever could surf until she found an architect's portfolio that suited some view of her needs. Surely there are architects whose work embodies values that can be recognized and matched to a situation. I would ask: is

classicism an appropriate choice for Berkeley? This process of choice presumes that the architect has provided *a priori* a body of critical content that might be reconstituted in the particular locale. The process assumes, as well, that the choosers bring a critical mind to the process, for in their choice of architect they are effectively prescribing the building's context.

The other direction would be toward so-called authenticity. In other words, each place has—or can have—its own architecture. To fulfill this view, the client would seek out an architect known not for a signature “look” but for a body of work whose signature has varied with the particularities of different sites. The act of arriving at an authentic response to a place would bias a process of research and discovery over a process of choosing and immediate understanding. Certainly there is more risk involved, because it opens the door to an *ad hoc* unconventionality (which, incidentally, might well be suited to the political climate of Berkeley).

There are, to be sure, many examples of public processes that have yielded greater success than that of the Tsukamoto Public Safety Building. During the development of this building, there was general agreement on siting issues, scale, and the arrangement of the pieces. But when attention turned to the surfaces and the language of the building, the absence of an adequate public process undermined the building's potential to represent the city's character. The very diversity and expressiveness that Berkeley's political culture has popularized was in this case categorically barred from the built environment. Unfortunately, this sort of outcome is all too common in the American city.

The example of Berkeley is chilling because it exposes the disconnection between a cultural context and the legibility of an architecture. Why are we so loathe to accept diversity and expression in our built environment, when we applaud it in our political environment? If the architect is to act as provocateur, as an agent and partner in creating a critical public realm, she has the responsibility to teach the value of innovation and the ability of architecture to express a context beyond the merely adjacent. The architect must be convincing, not merely demonstrative, to be entrusted to steer the collaborative criticism that gives rise to our best architecture. ●



Here follow the 2001 AIACC Design Award winners. Out of these many, excellent projects, we have selected five for a closer look. Our process was neither systematic nor pure. I sought the suggestions of the editorial board, who were intrigued by the range of scales represented this year, then I freely modified those suggestions to include a project or two of particular interest to our roving correspondent. Roving and generous, for she—Therese Tierney, AIAS—graciously agreed to write the entire set of features. We are grateful for her enthusiasm, her diligence, and her insight. —Editor



Ground Zero Ad Agency, Marina Del Rey // Merit Award



// Shubin + Donaldson Architects, Inc., Santa Barbara

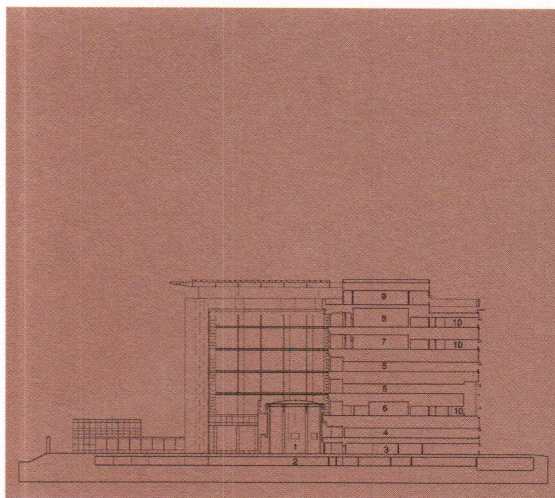


International Elementary School, Long Beach // Merit Award

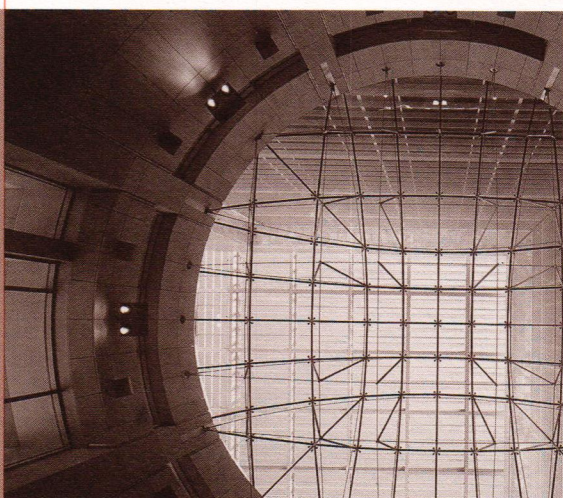


// Thomas Blurock Architects, Costa Mesa, and Morphosis, Santa Monica





Lloyd D. George United States Courthouse, Las Vegas, Nevada // Merit Award



// Cannon Dworsky, Los Angeles



New International Terminal, San Francisco International Airport // Honor Award



// Joint Venture: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP, Del Campo & Maru, Michael Willis Architects, SF



Private Residence, Northern California // Honor Award



// Turnbull Griffin Haesloop, Berkeley

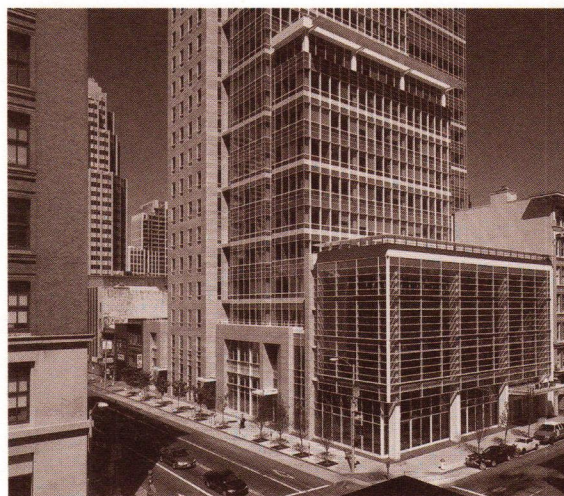




Paul Brown Stadium, Cincinnati, Ohio // Merit Award



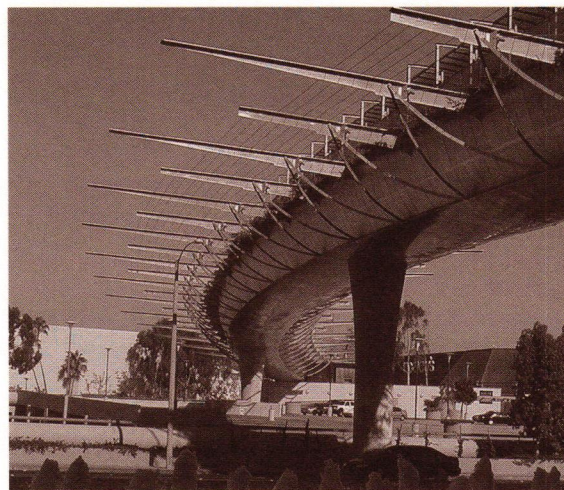
// NBBJ Sports & Entertainment, Marina del Rey



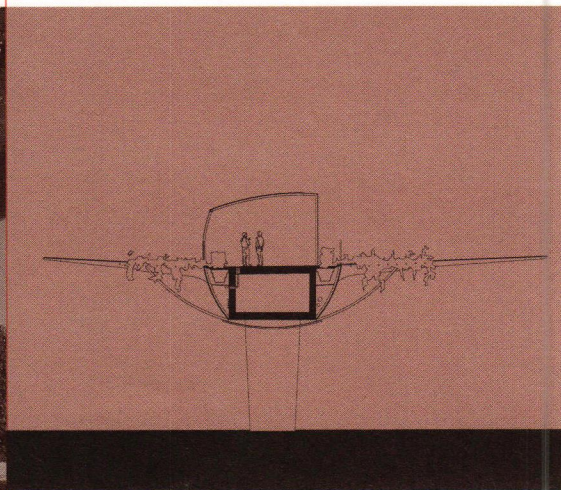
101 Second Street, San Francisco // Merit Award



// Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP, San Francisco

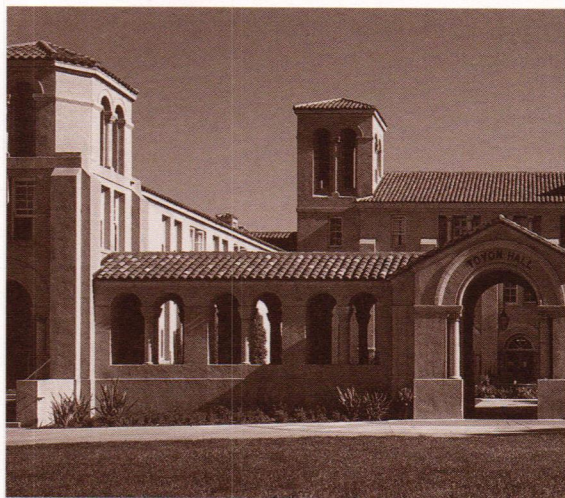


South Coast Plaza Pedestrian Bridge, Costa Mesa // Honor Award



// Kathryn Gustafson/Design Lead, Vashon, Washington, and Ellerbe Becket, San Francisco/Seattle

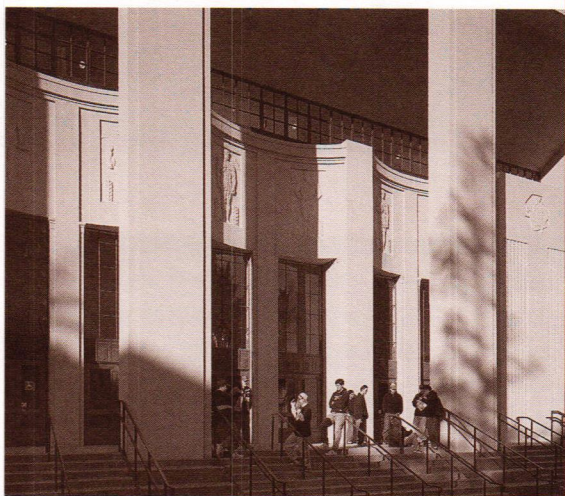




Toyon Hall Renovation, Stanford University // Merit Award



// Cody Anderson Wasney Architects, Inc., Palo Alto



Walter A. Haas, Jr., Pavilion, University of California at Berkeley // Merit Award



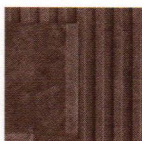
// Ellerbe Becket, San Francisco



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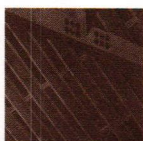
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1 Metro Red Line Station, Los Angeles // Ellerbe Becket, Los Angeles (pp. 32-33)

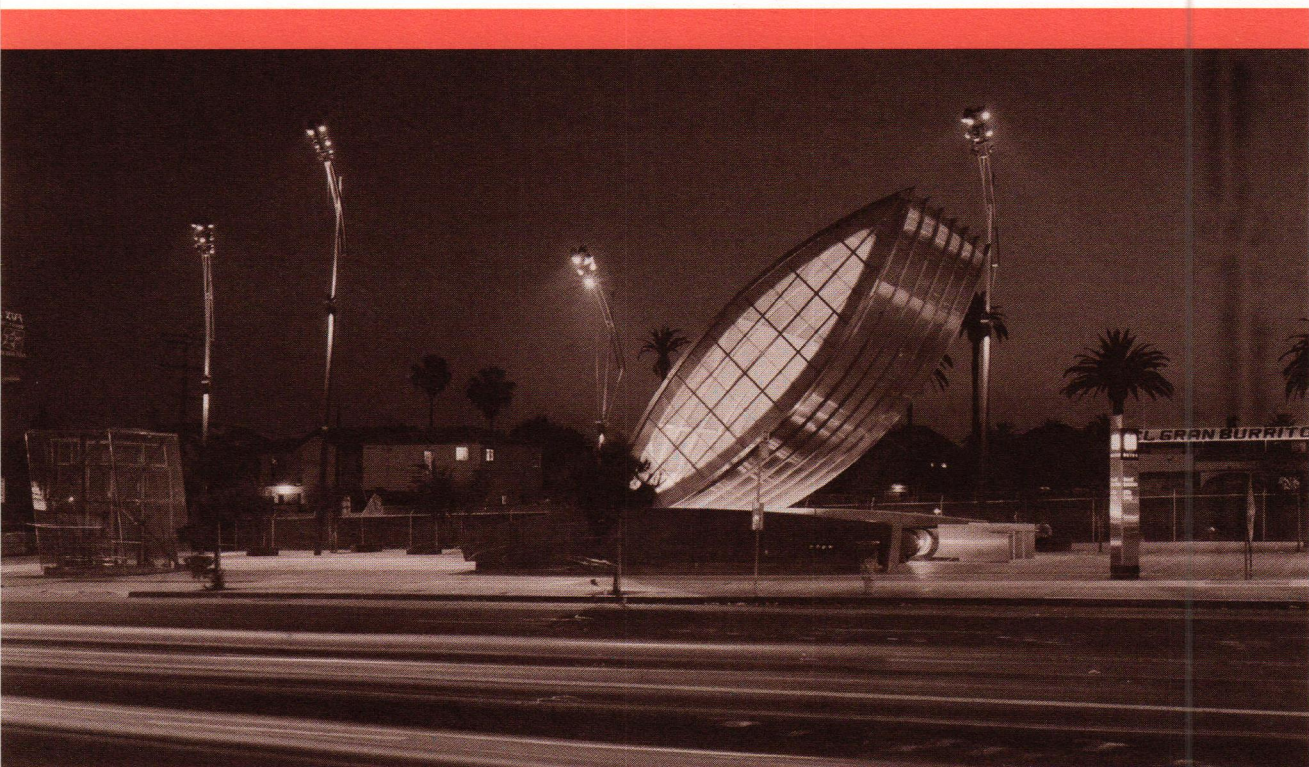
2 Diamond Ranch High School, Pomona // Morphosis, Santa Monica, and Thomas Blurock Architects, Costa Mesa (pp. 34-35)

3 Reactor Films, Santa Monica // Pugh & Scarpa, Santa Monica (pp. 36-37)

4 Iann/Stolz Residence, San Francisco // Kuth/Ranieri Architects, San Francisco (pp. 38-39)

5 Long Meadow Ranch Winery, St. Helena // Turnbull Griffin Haesloop, Berkeley (pp. 40-41)





## Metro Red Line Station

Los Angeles

Ellerbe Becket, Los Angeles

### Honor Award

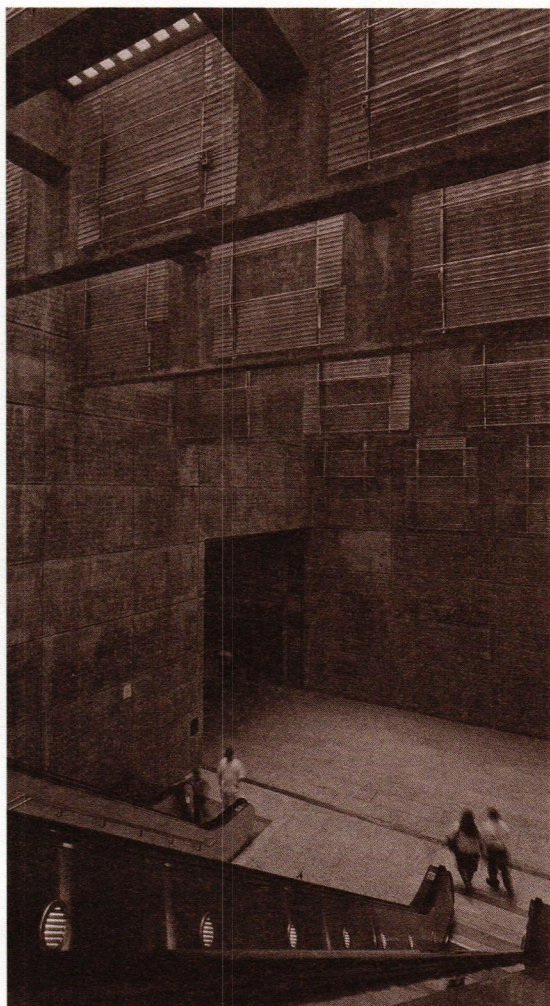
Defying gravity, like a shining fish leaping out of the water with a flick of its tail, a great silver ellipse beckons. Situated at the crowded intersection of Vermont and Santa Monica Boulevard, north of downtown Los Angeles, is a new metro station with an identity and dignity rarely found within the oppositional landscape of relentless grid and chaotic signage of Los Feliz.

Completion of this dramatic public structure and plaza required endless navigation through the stringent design regulations of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). The spatial configurations of stations, as well as the palette of allowable materials, were expressly defined by the MTA. In response to these parameters, project architect Mehrdad Yazdani's strategy was to use bold, clearly understood gestures that could withstand the tedious planning and approval process. Instead of a ubiquitous parking lot, the architect's proposal included a series of retail shops and a public performance space to enliven the square.

The metro project was conceived sectionally as a series of layers—above surface, transitional space, and below surface—incorporating movement as well as space. Distribution of program follows the path of natural light.

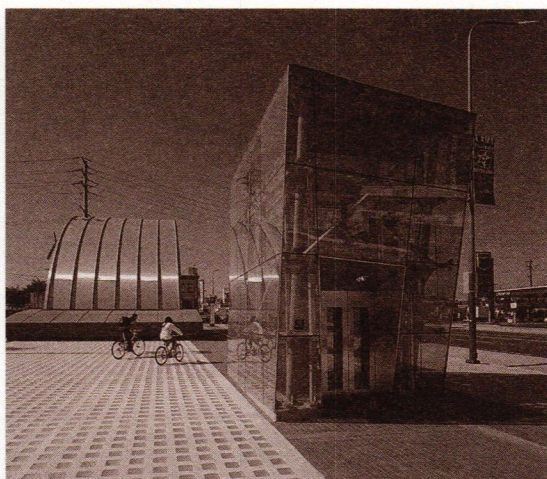
Yazdani handled each of the three layers in a different way. At the surface, marking the entry and serving





clearly from a distance as signage, is a large, elliptical metal canopy. The carefully balanced ellipse is situated within a gridded plaza comprised of small glass blocks. During the day, the monumental stainless steel structure allows natural light into the transit station below street level. At night, oversized, oblique light posts brightly illuminate the plaza for the safe movement of passengers. Red, custom-designed light standards establish a monumental scale and rhythm marking the plaza's perimeter. "It was a way to recall the Red Line," says Yazdani, "[and] the poles help to knit together the fragmented nature of the surroundings."

Escalators pass beneath the glass pavers, small skylights muting the bright sunlight. The descent invokes an almost primal response as cooler air and echoing sounds reverberate off a darkened double height space. A sense of enigma pervades this vault hollowed out of the ground, as if one were entering a tomb or a church. In the subdued light, one's eyes adjust, moving along the walls where Yazdani



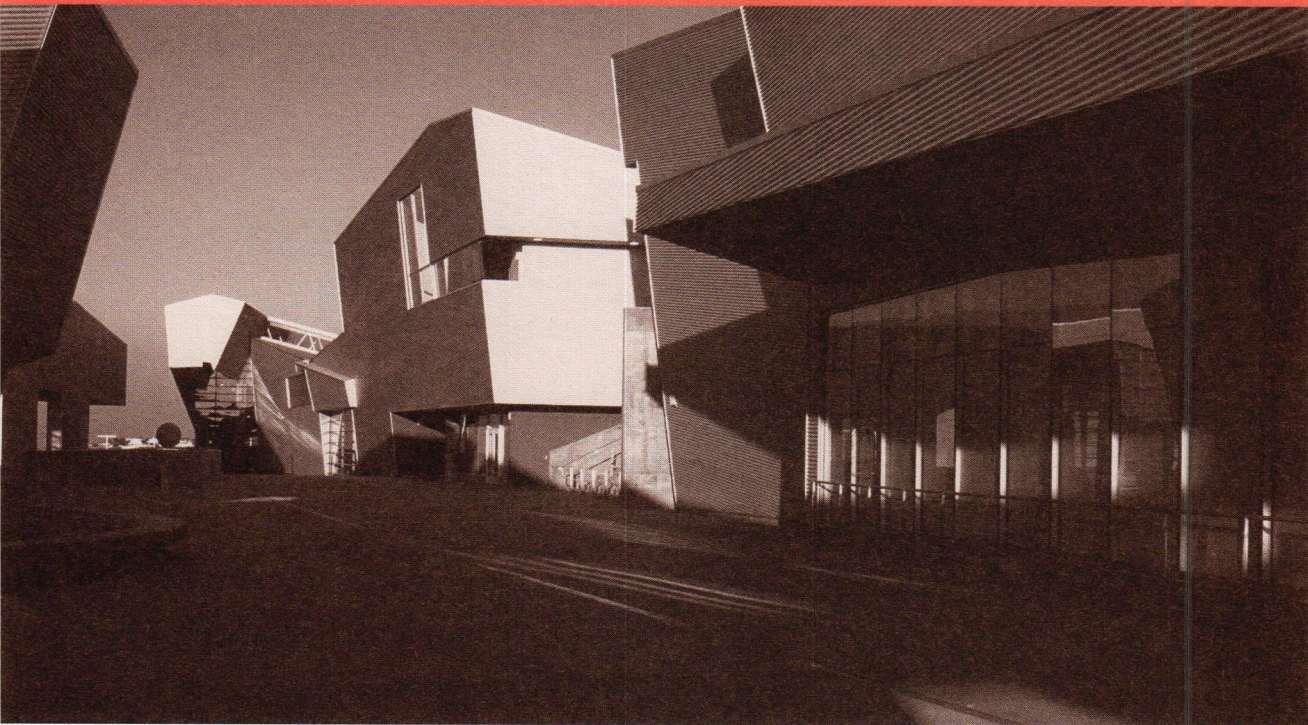
worked jointly with artist Robert Millar to stencil 10,000 questions about the design process on the exposed concrete walls: "How does art alter our perceptions?" "What is the relationship of art to architecture?" "What makes architecture?" "Why do we participate in social activities?" "What can the role of failure be in politics?" Yazdani elaborates that "the text is an exploration of the design process and the relationship between art, architecture, and the community."

The platform level below is defined by a central row of stainless steel columns alternately dividing and unifying the space. Stainless steel panels dematerialize as distorted images blur and reflect off the polished surfaces. Reflected images animate the space as trains carry their passengers to their destinations. On the ceiling, a series of stainless steel elliptical louvers, similar in form to the entrance canopy, recall to mind the entrance and provide artificial light.

Situated within a context of uninspired orthogonal forms, the tilted light standards and canted forms of both entrance canopy and elevator clearly suggest the potential of speed and movement of the metro trains below. The concept is carried throughout the plaza in the landscape furniture, which angles off in unexpected directions, keeping the eye in constant motion. The canted, glazed elevator enclosure reveals the intermittent movement of gears and cables as the cab traverses from surface to depth and back again.

The Metro Red Line Station brings to mind the positive anticipation of movement and travel. Through a meticulous and inspired collaboration with artist and engineer, the architect was able to create a visual beacon and public place within the community. In an area where little *civitas* is evident, this metro station has the power to generate meaning, to shake off the commercialism outside, to give pause and provide a moment for reflection. ●





## Diamond Ranch High School

Pomona

Morphosis, Santa Monica, and  
Thomas Blurock Architects, Costa Mesa

### Honor Award

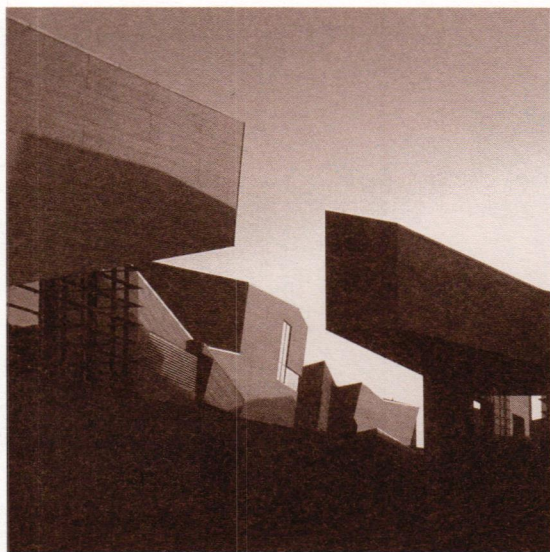
Speeding along Highway 60 in a hybrid gas/electric Toyota, I feel sure that the future has arrived. It's proved with certainty as I turn a corner and a dramatic series of corrugated aluminum forms commands my attention. Incredibly, this dynamic artificial landscape is a public high school, one of the latest projects by Morphosis. With a vista of hard-edged mountains and the city of Pomona below, the school's rooflines mimic the rugged hillside environment undulating with the terrain. Flanking the buildings, playing fields are incised in an act of terrestrial intaglio, carved into the earth, as the built structures erupt like rocky mineral outcroppings.

The project was concerned with three issues: the complex's conceptual stance towards the site environment, social groupings, and educational flexibility. Morphosis's first goal was to take advantage of the natural beauty of the site by integrating the playing fields and buildings into the surrounding hillside. The second goal was the creation of a dynamic built environment that would invite maximum social interaction among students, faculty, and staff. Finally, their third intention was to provide a flexible teaching environment that allowed a solid foundation of core curriculum for grades 9-10 and offered a focus on specific program majors in grades 11-12.

Morphosis was awarded this project through a competition, their concept illustrative of a fusion between



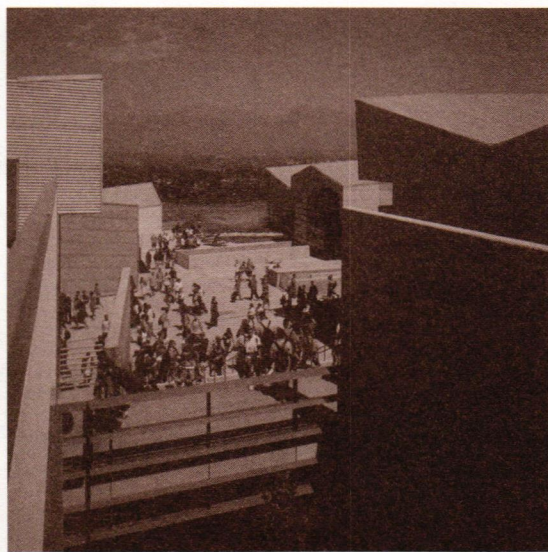




architecture and topography. While much of the steeply sloped site was considered unbildable, Thom Mayne, AIA, understood this to be an advantage, allowing him the opportunity to continue his investigations that blur distinctions between object and site. Acknowledging the complex balancing act required between cut and fill, he concentrated his efforts on a refolding of the landscape. His initial concept of geologic strata bending under unseen forces evolved into a linear plateau enclosed by shifting, folded roofscapes.

Socially, the intention was to create a densification of cultural experience like that found in urban areas, but juxtaposed here against the school's suburban environment. Formally, the buildings' canted metal accretions and angled parapets, though nonstructural, exhibit a dynamism that early twentieth century Futurists often associated with the modern city. Central to the school's parti is the "main street," which serves as a social gathering place and, in Southern California's mild climate, becomes as important as the buildings themselves. Explains Mayne, "In this project, we were interested in providing a model for a public school facility that speaks to the students experientially through a symbolic, physically kinetic, architectural language. We were interested in reversing the message that has been sent by a society that routinely communicates its disregard for the young by educating them in haphazardly arranged, temporary bungalows surrounded by impenetrable chain link fencing."

The grades 9-10 classrooms are located on the downhill side of the street, while grades 11-12 are placed on the uphill side. These two principal divisions were conceived as small "schools within a school" and are articulated as separate buildings that create a series of clusters. Each unit



has its own outdoor teaching or gathering space and a teacher's workroom. Each is orientated to command a view of the valley and mountains beyond. Arranged in split level configurations, a series of ramps and shaded tunnels interconnects these areas to each other as well as to the rest of the school.

The initial impression of angular complexity belies an inherently ordered, rational organization. Sectionally, the athletic fields and classrooms stairstep down the terraced hillside, while circulation follows the topographic contours. The primary circulation, or "main street," connects classrooms, library, and support spaces. Secondary circulation is parallel to the main street, but routed at different levels. This over/under strategy produces a hybrid approach to form and program. The buttresses of the gymnasium retaining wall penetrate through the roof terrace plane to support shading devices and flexible seating for the stadium. Other building walls that would conventionally be static instead roll up to create a stage or performance space. Outdoor stairs, which at the same time serve as classroom roofs, transform into amphitheater seating during performances.

The excitement at Diamond Ranch High School is generated not out of a sophisticated material palette (the materials here—corrugated metal, stucco, glass, and exposed concrete—are simple and restrained), but instead out of the pure geometric potency of the forms and their structuring. An inventive, exploratory approach to site utilization has produced a socially stimulating school. And, through intelligent planning and careful detailing, it was built within the standard school budget of \$140 per square foot. Most importantly, the students and faculty are wildly enthusiastic about it. ●







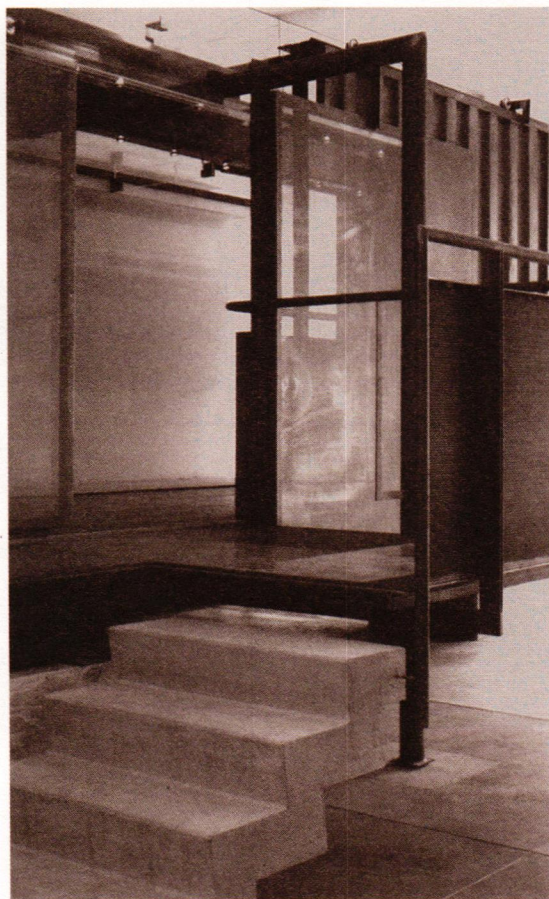


charette does. Says Pugh, "Contrary to expectations, the time constraint didn't compromise design; if anything, it actually catalyzed the work."

Their design examines the tension between the old and the new. The existing 1930 Art Deco tile-faced building was kept intact, with newly proportioned storefront glazing inserted between the masonry frame. As Scarpa explains, the interior can be viewed as "a skin or surface wrapper that moves in and out between the existing brick walls, alternately concealing and revealing the existing building fabric." The layering and folding of the newly plastered surfaces weave together disparate materials. The existing concrete floor was sandblasted, and, where an existing wall was removed, a backlit, perforated metal panel traces the floor plate. Recalling film director Alfred Hitchcock's interest in openings as metaphors, here, too, voids are as important as surfaces, revealing an earlier pattern of materials or use.

Of particular interest is the conference room, which is made out of a dissected and reconfigured ocean-shipping container. Procured from a Long Beach shipping yard, the rusted container is treated as an urban artifact encrusted with rich historical signification. Invoking the pervasive modern experience of the freeway, the redefined container has been elevated as an honorific object, its concrete bases generated from the forms of overpass pylons. Above, freeway lights brilliantly illuminate the piece as sculpture, an index registering the passage of time and miles. Mitered steel pipes, cantilevered concrete stairs, and perforated metal screens welded to heavy metal panels slide on tracks, alternately expanding or contracting the space of the conference room. One's direct response to such overwhelming materiality is immediate: welded and patinated metal, sliced and reassembled, creates atavistic connections that extend into some future time when petroleum will no longer fuel our desires.

The movement of light and people engages and activates the entire space, creating a filmic quality of time



and movement. Light here is also used as an ordering device: a luminous slot in the ceiling draws you into and through the space. It is a register of the passage of time as well as a social connector. And, realizing that most of the production staff work in concentrated isolation, the architects designed semi-translucent partitions that relay visual information as people pass by or as the outside weather changes.

In *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, Robert Venturi writes, "A familiar thing seen in an unfamiliar context can become perceptually new as well as old."<sup>1</sup> Context—here, a 1930's storefront—provides the frame. While acknowledging the *mise en scene*, the architects play with our cultural expectations. By placing objects, such as the shipping container, "outside the frame," they create a new frame of reference and deepen our sense of perception. It has been said that art does not reproduce what we see; rather it makes us see. Such is certainly the case here. ●

#### Notes

1. Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966), p. 43.

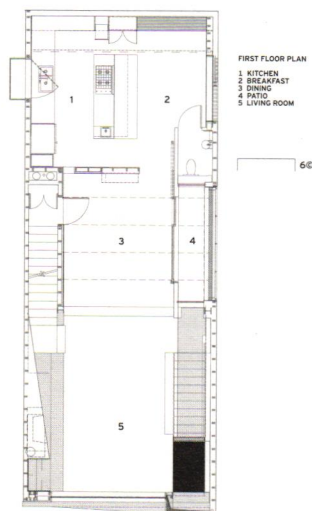




## Iann/Stolz Residence

San Francisco

Kuth/Ranieri Architects, San Francisco



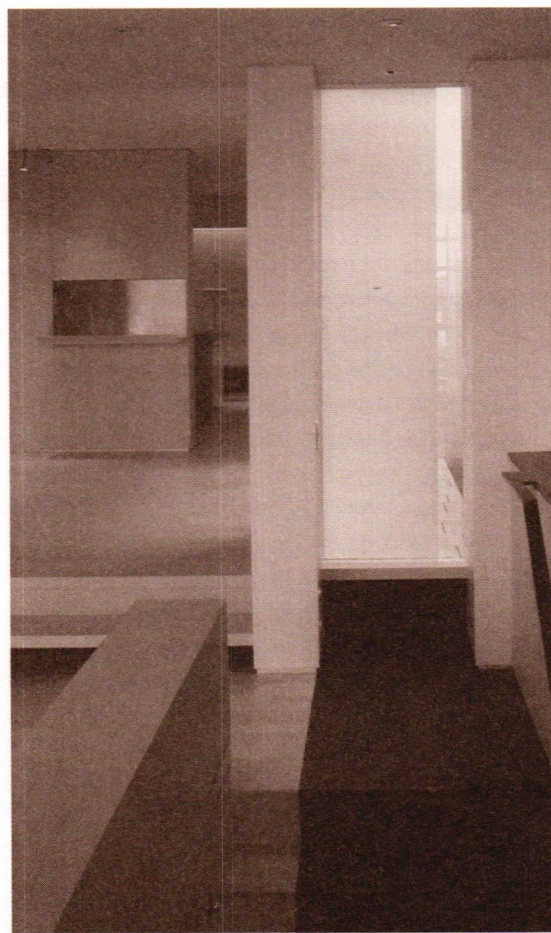
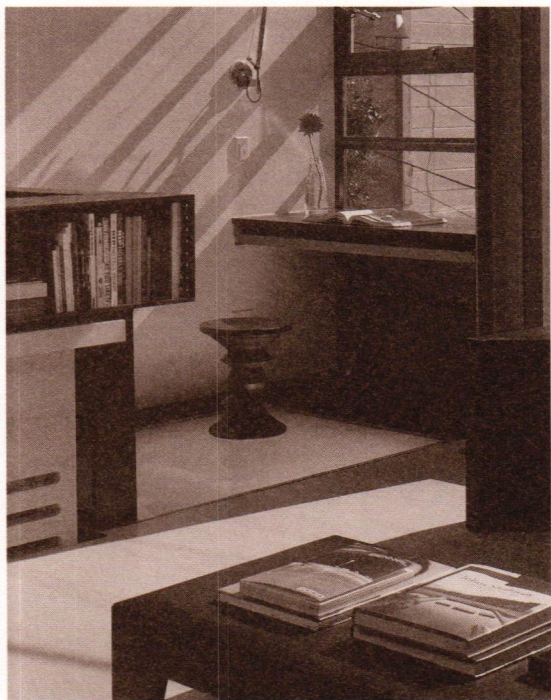
## Merit Award

At the end of a narrow lane on Nob Hill is a residence that explores the idea of house as fine artifact. Its board and batten exterior signals a recognition of Bay Area regional typology, but rendered here in a rarified treatment of varnished mahogany panels. Demonstrating a confident handling of materials and the art of joinery, the battens align and merge with steel horizontal window mullions angling out towards the lane. Folded into a synthetic assembly, the familiar elements of garage door, front door, and bay window coalesce into a sum greater than its parts.

The architect's site-specific installation, "Fabrications," at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1998, convinced the clients to select Kuth/Ranieri to design their home. The installation had focused on the complex relationship between the human body and the fabricated building. Exploring the idea of the body in repose, with thick felt seats and curtains embedded in a gallery wall, it was commended for its tactile and emotive use of materials.

Using a similar approach in their architectural projects, Kuth/Ranieri address programmatic requirements directly, starting from an analysis of basic systems and materials. Byron Kuth, AIA, explains, "We use common, everyday components and like to destabilize their traditional meaning." In this case, they questioned the characteristics of





typical woodframe construction—limited dimensions, a matrix of small units, a particular means of assembly—to develop a rigorous internal logic that might escape the whims of fashion.

One of the challenges was to fit a fairly large program on a small, twenty-three foot wide site. Spatially, the intention was to open up the house as much as possible to views and light, placing services, stairs, and bathrooms at the blind sides. The plan at each level is organized to frame and receive expansive vistas to the bay, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Marin Headlands beyond. In a loftlike configuration, the high-ceilinged interiors provide a continuous flow of space and light. And by excavating a full story below grade, the architects were able to include a three-car garage and impromptu gallery space for their clients.

Within the context of the open plan, living room, dining room, and kitchen are clearly yet unexpectedly defined. Instead of conventional walls that block light and shrink space, a language of visual cues relating to scale, material, and use subtly differentiate activity zones. Defined by a sectional displacement, the dining room is really a room within the larger living room. Evocative materials—stainless steel, blackened steel, limestone, bleached maple, and integrally-colored plaster—articulate and communicate different programmatic uses.

With unusual singularity, this house shifts and moves, responsive to the inhabitants' needs and desires. Walls perceived as solid and static transform into furniture or pivot and fold away completely. Meticulously planned moveable units with inventive dual uses provide flexible specificity. Precisely detailed retractable shelving, sliding panels, and rolling track doors shift effortlessly or disappear, creating the impression of a much larger space. At the roof deck located off the master bedroom, retractable glass doors disappear, causing the boundaries between interior and exterior to dissolve, merging the view with the room.

The design approach of Kuth/Ranieri balances the framework of a rational system with an open-ended exploration of ideas. "Our world has been reduced to surfaces," says Kuth, "computer screens, signs, television. We're trying to reclaim a tactile and physical presence in a world obsessed with electronic and consumer imagery." This house, detailed to the level of fine cabinetry, with materials sensuously used and inventively joined, makes familiar forms new. ●





## Long Meadow Ranch Winery

St. Helena

Turnbull Griffin Haesloop, Berkeley

### Honor Award

"It occurs to me now when we talk about 'images that motivate,' mine are not abstract or metaphorical but overwhelmingly concrete and tangible. They are the sites I build on and are always distinct from one another. The shape of the ground, the view, the quality and type of tree cover, the sun, the wind all have voices that I listen to and learn from."

The accomplishments of William Turnbull, founding principal of MLTW, are numerous and well documented. It is probably less well known that this Princeton graduate's abiding connection to the landscape was inspired by his early years on a farm and was later expressed in his own working vineyard in Napa. In the March/April 1988 issue of *Architecture California*, he expressed concern regarding the disneyfication of the Napa Valley, which was rapidly churning out Italian villas and French chateaux. Turnbull argued instead for an architecture that would respond to the rural landscape, drawing on local traditions and materials. Two projects—the Long Meadow Ranch Winery and a private residence in Northern California (pg. 29)—begun by Turnbull and completed by his partners, Mary Griffin, AIA, and Eric Haesloop, AIA, illustrate the extension of Turnbull's vision in the ongoing work of the firm.

With one of the oldest olive groves in Napa County, dating from the 1880's, the Long Meadow Ranch is now a family-owned organic farm with a small winery, fermentation caves



and an olive oil processing facility. The owners are committed to sustainability in architecture as well as agriculture; their commitment drove the entire project from siting to construction method to the smallest fabrication detail. Simply, the intention was to minimize the impact on the environment. In a landscape of softly curved hills, native oaks, and grasses, the site was selected for its central location and northern orientation. Most importantly, the steep slope of the hillside was ideal for tunneling into. Weaving a synthesis between the natural topography with the rational program, the winery mediates between the native forest edge and the cultivated vineyards, between the raw and the refined.

The wine and olive oil processes share the same building, but are located in separate wings and have complementary seasonal harvest periods. Straddling the two wings is a shaded open porch used for the crush during grape harvest and for loading the olive press during the olive harvest. Based on an 18th century panopticon typology, the view from the second floor office extends across the entire vineyard and orchard beyond.

What is particularly innovative about this winery is its method of construction. The two-foot thick walls are made of *pise de terre*, as it is known in France, or PISE (pneumatically injected sealed earth) here. Excess earth, excavated to form the wine cellar caves, was mixed with cement and engineered with steel to form the rustic walls. Although similar to the Southwest's rammed earth in composition, here the earth is not compacted within a wooden formwork, but instead a soil/cement mixture is pneumatically injected into a steel reinforcing cage. Extensive reinforced concrete foundations were required to support the weight of the earth walls; a 4'x16'x2' section of wall weighs over 10,000 pounds. The walls are finished with a mixture of white portland cement mixed

with the native earth to integrate the natural color of the soil. Last, piano wire is drawn across the face of the walls, leaving a rough texture. Requiring little maintenance and absorbing sound, the solid walls feel as if they are part of the mountain.

No air conditioning is needed; only passive features are used to maintain a constant temperature in the winery. Locating the building on the shaded side of the hill minimizes heat gain, while the thick walls provide the necessary insulation and thermal mass. Other passive strategies include a night air cooling/ventilation system and connection of the interior spaces to the stable, cooler temperatures within the caves.

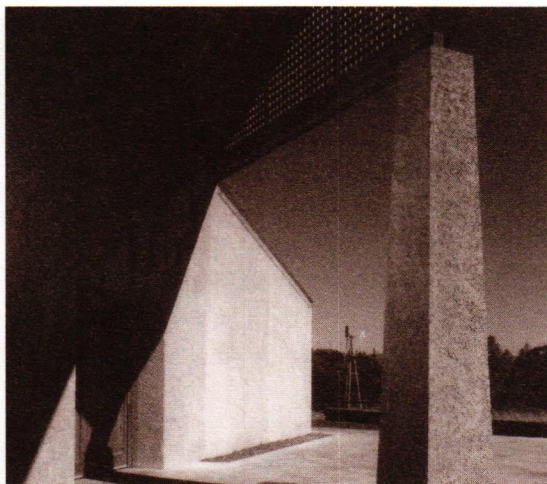
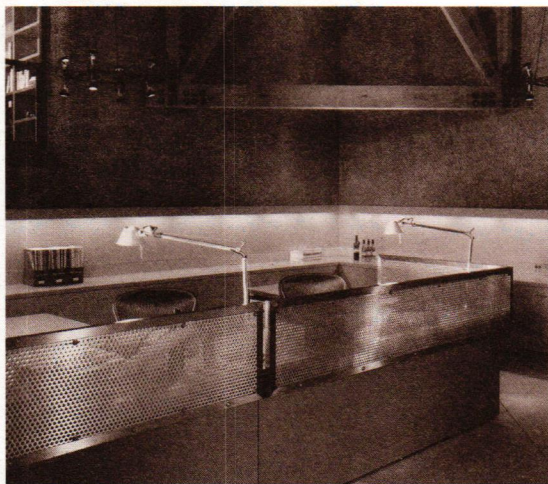
The structure is exposed throughout; roof and floor framing utilize recycled timber from a bridge. The systems are expressed and detailed to bolt directly and unapologetically onto the earth walls. In addition, the architects designed the lights and worked with a local designer on the furniture. The tables, chairs, shelving, and lights were all fabricated locally.

Turnbull's legacy is a deeply considered architectural response to the landscape; his talent was to place structures with a sense of always having been a part of their rural surroundings. "Bringing out the simplicity and clarity of a particular situation will be his most cherished tradition," writes architectural historian Mitchell Schwarzer.<sup>2</sup> At Long Meadow Ranch Winery, with appropriateness and honest simplicity, Mary Griffin and Eric Haesloop continue the timeless quality of his work. ●

#### Notes

1. William Turnbull, Jr., "Images that Motivate: the Legacy of Charles Moore," *Places* 11 (1998), p. 40.

2. Mitchell Schwarzer, "William Turnbull, Jr., and the Unveiling of the Country House," *William Turnbull, Jr., Buildings in the Landscape* (San Francisco: William Stout Publishers, 2000), p. 55.





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## Affordable Housing Today

A Conversation with Michael Wilks



Michael Wilks, FAIA, founded his own architecture firm in 1988. He believes that architecture can be a unifying social force. His firm focuses on multifamily housing, civic and community facilities, urban design, office interiors and water treatment plants. Michael Wilks Architecture has offices in San Francisco, Oakland, and Portland.

**arcCA:** We have been designing affordable housing for over fifty years in this country. Are we learning anything?

**MW:** We have learned that affordable housing is not "out there" for all. Housing is regional, in terms of economics, policy, and design. We have learned that

successful affordable housing creates people on several levels. It is important to have personal space indoors and out, space where you can meet your immediate neighbors, and a place where as entire community can come together. Security is essential, but security that does not isolate you. Affordable housing that is not connected to transportation, shopping, education and social services will probably fail. And one, countries also create a DHS line to be expensive. From the earliest point of view, it is important that clients recognize these places as housing, that not everyone does as "poor people's housing." We have learned that using poor people to test an architect's grand experiment is not a good idea. Some aspects of these experimental housing types fail and fall apart, and then we forget to look in the successful housing that has been built all over

the country, and we think that we have to reinvent a new type. The result has been that we have created islands of experimentation that are not connected to the city. By contrast, I still think the radical human approach considers the conditions in the city without any intervention at all.

**arcCA:** Access Village in Oakland and LaCade Town in St. Louis were both intended to be mixed income. Why didn't they work? Why didn't they reflect the city?

**MW:** I think LaCade Town is an interesting case because it had a limited time margin and had a lot of things. Access Village was a village with a lot of things. There were some key differences. In Access Village, it was a village for the people who live there. LaCade Town was a village. In Access Village, the history of public and private space was very good, and the design picked up on some subtle regional cues. LaCade Town's accessibility was not met as a result of something that would not be permitted today. The managers of LaCade Town selected who would live there—not as a line

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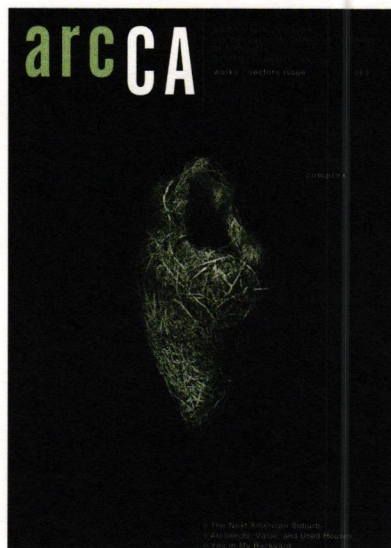
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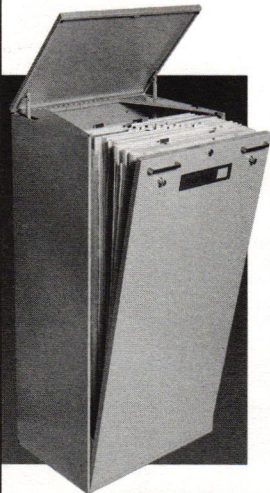
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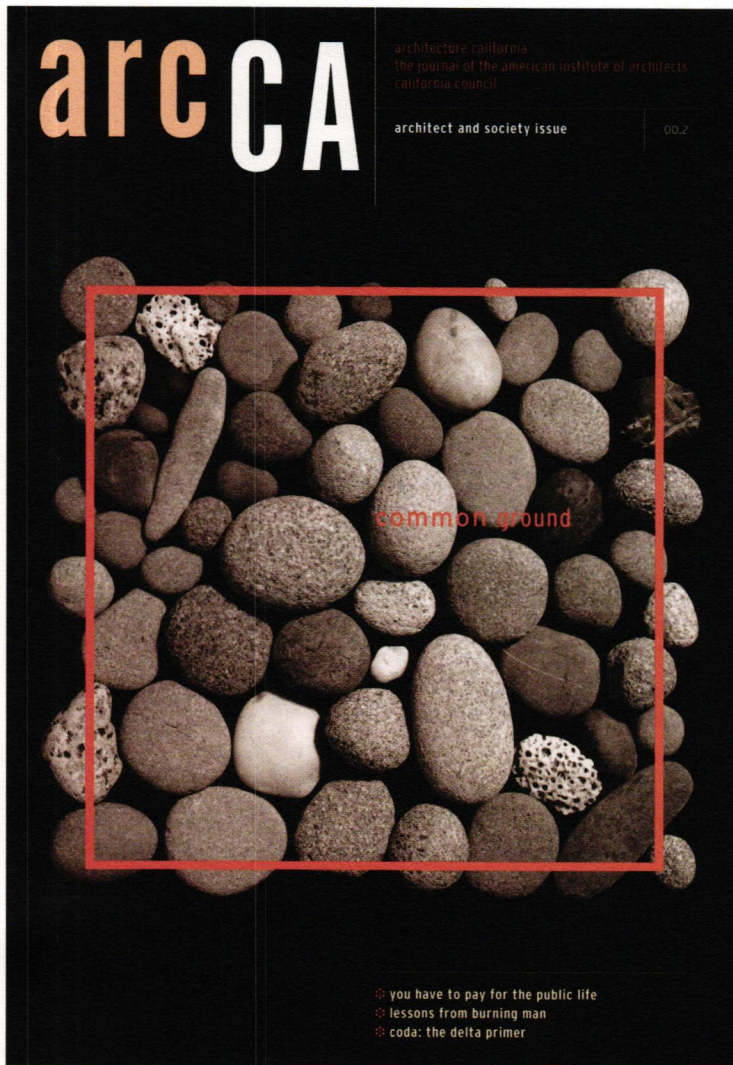
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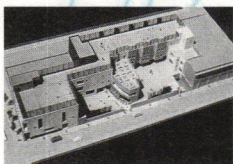
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## The State of Public Space

**Lisa Padilla, AIA**

Is there adequate room for Californians? While a comparative assessment of employment, housing, and quality of life is not easily calculated, there are some measures that might help us approximate an answer.

The State of California covers 155,959 square miles. Census 2000 reports a population of 217 people per square mile. New York averages 348 and Texas 78 people per square mile (the national average is 80 people per square mile). Twenty percent of the state is national forest. One percent is state owned parks, reserves, and recreation areas. Along our most famous border, the Pacific Ocean, half of the 1,100 mile coastline is privately owned and inaccessible to the public. Conversely, there are 850 public access sites along the coast, which range from developed beach parks to narrow pedestrian walkways.

If the quantitative assessment is not obvious, then one relies on qualitative assessment. New Urbanists believe the future can only be met with greater density and a central framework of public spaces. Meanwhile, environmentalists press for more open space, not just for the sake of recreation, but to preserve native ecosystems. Are we too tight, or sprawling beyond reason? As architects who shape the environment daily, we apply our own qualitative measure to local projects, reconciling facts with experience and perception. The answer may differ if we are waiting for a bus in San Francisco, shopping in a Los Angeles mini-mall, cheering in a San Diego stadium, or sitting amidst the Central California Sequoias. Wherever we are, the answer is not easy to figure, if it can be figured at all. ●

Sources: California Department of Finance, California Coastal Commission, U.S. Census Bureau.

